

PRESS RELEASE:

Saco Route 112/Exit 36 Area Transportation Study FINAL Recommendations

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Final Recommendations from Saco Route 112/Exit 36 Area Transportation Study Now Available

Over the past year, the City of Saco has been exploring and evaluating potential improvements to the morning and evening congestion occurring on Route 112 and surrounding roads. This study has taken place in partnership with the Maine Turnpike Authority and Maine Department of Transportation, and final recommendations are now available.

The first of three short-term recommendations is to make improvements at the Route 112/Jenkins Road intersection, including installation of a traffic signal and a dedicated left-turn lane on Route 112. Another is to prohibit left turns both from and onto Garfield Street from Route 112. And third, a traffic signal is recommended at the Route 112 and Franklin Street intersection. The report noted that conditions at the Route 112 and Spring Street intersection should be monitored for a possible future traffic signal.

The first of two longer-term recommendations focuses on modifying Exit 36 so as to provide full north and south access to the Turnpike directly from Route 112 at Lund Road (with a signal) and at a new signalized intersection west of the Turnpike. The second longer-term recommendation calls for a new connector road between Route 112 and Route 5 immediately west of the Middle School. All these recommendations combined will reduce rush hour congestion on Route 112 and Industrial Park Road, as well as reduce cut-through traffic in Saco neighborhoods.

The criteria used to make these recommendations focused on the transportation effectiveness of the potential solution balanced against any negative impacts on

residents or the environment. Cost and availability of funding was also an important consideration. Concept-level estimates for each of the recommendations are as follows: Jenkins Road improvements, \$820,000; Garfield Street left-turn prohibition, \$90,000; Franklin Street traffic signal, \$820,000; Modification of Exit 36, \$34 million; Route 112/Route 5 Connector, \$5 million. Full details on these recommendations – as well as the criteria used – can be found at at <http://sacomaine.org/route112>.

The study's goal was to evaluate and identify long-term solutions to regional transportation issues associated with westerly connections from I-95 in the vicinity of Exit 36. Specifically, the purpose of the Study is to evaluate the potential for managing and improving access to Route 112, making safety improvements at intersections, maintaining and improving easy access to and from the Turnpike, and separating local and through traffic as much as practicable. Study recommendations are always subject to funding constraints and evaluated in the context of safety and mobility needs statewide.

Three well-attended public meetings were held during the study period, first to hear public concerns about travel in the study area, the second to get feedback on preliminary findings, and at the final meeting to hear feedback on draft recommendations. Online feedback was also welcomed.

City officials, the Maine Turnpike Authority and the Maine Department of Transportation will be working together to secure funding for these recommendations.